

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Robert R. Bowie  
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

SUBJECT : Presidential Intelligence Priorities

1. Action Requested: Your approval of the proposed procedure.
2. Under Presidential Directive 17, the Policy Review Committee for Intelligence is charged to define and prioritize substantive intelligence requirements. Clearly, both the Community and users will benefit if we can get genuine guidance from the Committee, especially as to what policy issues are uppermost in the minds of its members and what kinds of intelligence they will want in the next six to nine months.
3. Since the members of the PRC(I) are extremely busy, the risk is that they will turn the task over to staff officers, rather than provide their own guidance. Our aim should be to devise a procedure to involve the PRC(I) principals themselves and convince them that it is in their interest to level with us.
4. At the same time PRC(I) members should confine themselves to defining their needs and priorities for information and not try to set priorities for the collection of intelligence. Rather, the Intelligence Community should translate the guidance we get from the PRC(I) into programs for production, research and collection.
5. For the meeting of the PRC(I) on November 18th, it seems to me that we need a document which will stimulate the members to share their real policy concerns with us. As I explained in a memorandum to you two weeks ago, I believe that document should contain two lists. The first would be a list of long-term topics on which the intelligence agencies should maintain the capability to provide intelligence as and when needed, even though not required for current policy decisions. I would hope that the PRC(I) would simply ratify this list without spending too much time on it, and alter it as and when a major shift occurs in concerns or direction. The scope of this list should be quite broad so as to permit the flexibility to pursue research and analysis on trends and underlying factors.

6. The second list would be a series of questions that the PRC(I) wishes intelligence to address in the near term (6 to 9 months), and I would hope this list would be discussed in detail. The list attached was arrived at through a rather arduous process. Its outline reflects the contributions various departments made to the NSC Staff when David Aaron was charged with this effort. When the effort was turned over to me, I held two discussion meetings on my approach to the problem with representatives from the NSC Staff, State, Treasury, Defense, the JCS, and our own analytical organization. This group appointed a working group, which in turn gathered questions from all the organizations above. The working group then held two meetings, after which the chairman produced a synthesized list on the basis of the advice he had received. Finally, I reviewed and simplified the chairman's list. It is not an agreed list, and it does not conform to everyone's preferences. I do think, however, that it will serve our purposes quite well.

7. I would hope that PRC(I) members would react to this second list by telling us whether the individual questions are of a low, medium, or high level of interest to them. Perhaps they might also suggest different directions in which a question might be pointed to provide the sorts of answers they seek, or pose questions we have not asked. We will want to get these reactions at the PRC(I) meeting itself; if we allow the members to take a document away for a later response, we will increase the risk of getting a staff officer's reply. The document we put on the table, therefore, will have to be of proportions that can be worked through in an hour.

8. I would hope, finally, that the PRC(I) would return to the list of current topics every two to three months. Once we have completed the first review, I would think that subsequent exercises could be accomplished rather expeditiously.



Robert R. Bowie

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APPROVED:

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Director of Central Intelligence

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Date

DISAPPROVED:

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Director of Central Intelligence

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Date

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Approved For Release 2004/04/01 : CIA-RDP80M00165A001100020011-9

28 OCT 1977

Executive Registry

77-4841/2

N-23

17 June

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Robert R. Bowie  
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

SUBJECT : The Status of Work on Presidential  
Intelligence Priorities (Twenty  
Questions)

1. Action Requested: This memorandum is for your information only.

2. Background: You will recall that, back in the early summer, the responsibility for this project rested with the NSC Staff, to which you, State, OSD, and the JCS contributed suggested subjects that might be included in the list. After some six weeks of NSC Staff inaction, the responsibility was passed to me. Repeated efforts on my part to get a promised contribution from David Aaron were unproductive.

3. In late August, we decided to go ahead without a contribution from the NSC Staff. In approaching the problem, it seemed to me that the PRC will wish to make sure that the Intelligence Community devotes itself not only to furnishing information of immediate policy concern, but also to providing basic research on subjects that will be of policy concern over a protracted period of time. Consequently, I concluded that a two-tiered approach was appropriate. My staff and I set to work, accordingly, and developed a sample list of broad topics of basic long-term interest, intended to guide our long-range efforts in analysis and collection, and pointing the way to more specific topics for basic National Intelligence Estimates. We developed also a sample list of issues of immediate interest, most of which were, in fact, subsets of the sample list of the more basic topics.

4. These sample lists were circulated in late September to those persons I was able to identify as the representatives of OSD, JCS, State, Treasury, and the NSC Staff. After no

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small effort, this group was finally convened twice in October (minutes attached). The group agreed to the two-tiered approach, but it wished the sample list of immediate issues to be posed as questions. Accordingly, we appointed a working group to collect and sift through these questions.

5. The working group ended up with some 120 sets of questions. Unfortunately, the vast majority came from State/INR; OSD did not contribute any; Treasury provided only three; and the NSC Staff supplied us only with an internal working document which was almost unintelligible. The working group started working its way through this material on Thursday and will finish its first look this afternoon. No NSC representative was able to participate. The chairman plans this weekend to produce a synthesized list that reflects the group's comments. I will review it on Monday, at which point I will have to decide whether the list is in decent enough shape to take to my group, thus speeding up the process, or whether the working group will have to give the list a second review next week.

Robert R. Bowie

Distribution:

Original & 1 - Addressee

(1)- ER

1 - A/DDCI

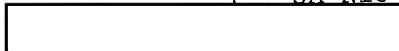
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28 Oct 77)



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17 October 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of the Presidential Priorities Group,  
11 October 1977

1. Mr. Bowie chaired the meeting, which was attended by Dr. Stevens and Mr. Lehman, CIA; Mr. Saunders, State; Mr. Bergsten and Mrs. Collins, Treasury; Mr. Bader, OSD; Lt. Gen. Smith, JCS; and Mr. Hoskinson, NSC.
2. The Group agreed that a two-list approach to setting Presidential Priorities is in order. List A would contain subjects on which policy makers expect the Intelligence Community to maintain a capability to be called upon as required. The PRC(I) might bless List A essentially as presented, though it would add to and delete from the list when major shifts in emphasis occur.
3. List B would contain topics which policy makers wish the Intelligence Community to address in the next six to nine months. The Group views its own List B essentially as a device to stimulate policy makers to define just which issues should be included in final List B.
4. The Group was agreed that List B, particularly, would not be considered a restraint on bringing to policy makers' attention matters that deserved their attention, but about which they have not expressed interest.
5. The Group recognized that the PRC(I) should not attempt to do more than define what information it wishes. It will remain for the intelligence agencies to refine Lists A and B into tasking for the producers of finished intelligence estimates and assessments, for program managers who must establish and nourish intelligence capabilities, and for the collectors of intelligence.
6. Lt. Gen. Smith asked Mr. Bowie if a link was envisaged between Lists A and B and resource issues. Mr. Bowie responded that he thought the DCI might, from time to time, report to the PRC(I) on the resource implications of its information requests. Mr. Bowie saw the process as one of mutual education.

ATTACHMENT

7. Messrs. Saunders and Stevens recommended that List B, particularly, be expressed in the form of questions. Mr. Saunders has converted List A into a series of questions, which he distributed. Mr. Bowie invited all members of the Group to make similar contributions, especially for List B, preferably prior to the Group's next meeting.

8. Mr. Saunders distributed a list of suggested additions to List B. Treasury had previously suggested additions to both lists, which were also distributed at the meeting.



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27 October 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of the Presidential Intelligence  
Priorities Group, 17 October 1977

1. Mr. Bowie chaired the meeting, which was attended by Mr. Saunders, State; Mr. Bader, OSD; Lt. Gen. Smith, JCS; Mr. Long, Treasury; Mr. Hoskinson, NSC; and Dr. Stevens, CIA.
2. The Group was agreed that List A should provide the framework for the questions that would make up List B, thus making it possible to move from one list to the other without confusion.
3. The PRC(I) members, when they are presented with List B, should be asked to check whether a specific question is of low, medium, or high interest, or of no concern to their particular areas of interest. There should be no limit on the number of questions submitted, but an effort should be made to keep the list as short as possible. The questions will concern only items of national interest, not of narrow departmental interest. Questions as a rule, moreover, will deal only with substance, not with such areas of activity as counterintelligence.
4. The procedure for changing the lists will be for the PRC(I) to address the lists periodically and change them as it deems appropriate. Once the PRC(I) has done its work with the lists, it will remain for Intelligence to decide which questions need to be addressed in finished intelligence products, which require the development of new analytical capabilities through basic research, and which require collection efforts.
5. There followed a discussion about the sorts of requirements the PRC(I) would have to address in order to make sensible decisions on resource issues. The Group recognized that it was probably dealing with only one facet of the work the PRC(I) will undertake. It was further recognized that lists A and B will be probably only one of several sorts of requirements and priorities that different sorts of producers, processors, and collectors will require--e.g., the DCID 1/2 attachment.

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6. Finally, the Group ordered the formation of a working group to compile a List B, drawing on the contributions of the various participants. Using List A as an outline, the working group will:

a. when it encounters more than one version of a question, select the best formulation.

b. when it encounters overlapping questions, combine and consolidate them.

c. compile a list of question to be dropped.

The working group was asked to complete its work as expeditiously as possible under the chairmanship of the undersigned.



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| TRANSMITTAL SLIP  |            | DATE<br>19 Nov 77  |
| TO: D/DCI/NFAC  |            | Executive Registry |
| ROOM NO.  | BUILDING   | 77-48413           |
| REMARKS:<br><br>This material on "priorities" (which the common man still calls "20 Questions") comes from the DCI's out box. I assume you will be collecting and serving him whatever he will need for the upcoming PRC(I) on the subject. |            |                    |
| FROM:   | [Redacted] |                    |
| ROOM NO.  | BUILDING   | EXTENSION          |

FORM NO 241  
1 FEB 55REPLACES FORM 36-8  
WHICH MAY BE USED.

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